Searchers of the Unknown

"Target 20" variant (SOTUt20)

Another minimalist way to play D&D

Concept

A typical old-school D&D module lists a monster's stats like this: (AC6, MV9', HD 1, hp 4, #AT1, D1-10 by halberd). The idea is that, if it's enough for monsters, it should be enough for PCs too. This rules-light system enables you to play these modules in that way. This variant alters the SOTU rules slightly to "higher is better" for d20 rolls.

Build a PC

This system assumes PC's are dungeon crawlers, delvers and swordsmen. Clerics rules churches; and wizards laboratories, or could be villains, but don't venture into dungeons.

1° Choose an armor. This determines your PC's armor class (AC) and a movement rate (MV).

Armor	AC	MV
No armor	9	12'
Leather armor	7	9'
Chainmail	5	6'
Plate mail	3	3'
Shield	-1	-1'

2° Roll for hit points, 1d8 per level (HD). So, 1d8 for a PC starting at first level.

3° Choose three weapons, or two weapons and a shield

Weapon	Description	Damage
Small weapons	easily concealable (dagger or sling)…	1d4
Range weapon	bow, crossbow…	1d6
Melee weapon	mace, sword, hammer…	1d8
2-handed weapon	2-handed sword, polearm…	1d10

4° Number of attacks (AT) is 1 at start, then rises to 2 at level 5, 3 at level 9 and so on. When a PC kills a monster, he can make another attack at the end of the same round.

5° Choose a name and a description. Choose a race, like human, dwarf, hobbit or elf (it has no rules effect, but it adds fun to the game). Imagine what he was before becoming an adventurer. Your PC is ready.

Example of character sheet: Humphrey the bald (AC 5 MV 9' HD 3 hp 14 #AT 1 D 1d10 with a voulgue).

Fighting

1° Initiative: Each combatant rolls 1d10+his AC. The highest score has initiative, other attacks occur in descending order. So a lightly armored fighter has a better chance to strike first. If one has several attacks (AT), he rolls initiative several times.

2° Attack: roll 1d20 and add the attackers level (HD) plus the targets AC and any modifiers. If the total score is 20 or higher, it's a hit. Example: to hit an AC 6 orc, a 3rd level adventurer needs an 11 or higher.

3° Damage: When you hit an opponent, roll your weapon damage (D) dice. Deduct the result from your opponents hit points (hp). When hp reach 0 (or below), monsters are dead, and PC's are knocked out. Monsters could kill them easily, but they won't. Instead, they keep them as prisoners. This is just more pulp-like.

4° Morale: If outnumbered, after the first death, and when reduced to one-half or fewer hit points, monsters check for morale. The DM rolls 1d10. If the result is over the monster's hit dice, it will withdraw or surrender to get a better position.

5° Rest and bandages: After combat ends, all hit points (hp) are restored to their initial score. After all, hit points reflect the capacity to avoid or withstand hits. If a PC is reduced to 0hp or below, he needs longer rest or even healing magic, (like a potion of healing), because he's actually wounded.

Adventure

1° Stealth & stunts: Sneaking up on a monster, hiding in shadows, moving silently, climbing or swimming are all easier in lighter armor. For each such action, roll 1d20 and add the character's AC+level. The action is successful if the total is 20 or higher. So a 4th level adventurer with a leather armor and a shield must roll 10 or higher to climb a cliff. For more difficult actions, the DM may choose 1d10 rather than 1d20.

2° Saving throws: When such a roll is needed for any reason, roll 1d20 and add the PC's level, +3. The save is successful if the total is 20 or higher. So a 7th level adventurer must roll a 10 or higher to escape a magical charm from a harpy. This "level+3" rule applies to every action not covered by the "stealth & stunts" rule, and fits common adventurers knowledge like searching for secrets doors or picking locks.

3° Dangers: If something could kill a man, like a fall, a fire or a trap, it does 1d8 points of damage. If it could kill a horse, 2d8. If it's could kill an ogre, 4d8. No more.

4° Magic: Most spells are self descriptive. As a rule, a spell will last for one fight, or one day for non-fighting spells; their range is one dungeon room, and their area of effect is also one room, or one creature per spell level, whichever best applies. Damage is treated as in the "danger" section. PC's may use spells from scrolls, only once, if the spell level is below or equal their own level.

Experience

PC's start at level 1 (1 Hit Dice). Each time they defeat a monster, by killing it or another method, they get 100 experience points per monsters hit dice, shared between the party. The number of experience points needed to level up is 2000 x the current level. There are no limits to levels. Gaining a new level means better rolls for fight, save and actions, and 1d8 more hit points. The player rerolls all hit dice. If the new score is higher than the old, keep the new total. If not, keep the old one. And now, for sure, fight on!

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